THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI ASOKE KUMAR SEN) : (a) and (b). The recommendation made by the Election Commission is still under examination. It relates to a very complex and sensitive issue. The question is being studied in all its aspects and the Government will consult the Political Parties after it comes to a decision.

(c) No agreement was reached in the meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Integration Council held in August, 1986 when some members had suggested such a step.

Assistance to small scale industries

*391. SHRI K. VASUDEVA PANICKER : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have formulated any new schemes to provide financial help to small scale industries and also to help the State small scale industries corporations; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI J. VENGAL RAO) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A series of new measures to give a boost to the small scale sector have been initiated with the setting up of the Small Industries Development Fund (SIDF) in the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) in May, 1986. This Fund has been created to provide assistance for development, expansion, diversification, modernisation and rehabilitation of small scale industrial units.

The Small Scale Industries Development Corporations (SSIDCs) have been brought within the purview of assistance of IDBI for the first time. SSIDCs will be provided assistance by subscriptions to their *ad-hoc* bonds/privately placed debentures, at concessional rate of interest to support their activities in the fields of marketing, supply of essential raw materials, sale of machinery on hire-purchase, setting up of industrial estates, etc.

Investment in Tree Plantation

*392. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of companies in the country are inviting specific amount deposits for investment in tree plantation offering attractive terms;

(b) if so, what are the names of such companies stating the terms offered by them for investment and the estimated amount collected by each of them so far; and

(c) whether Government propose to consider the activities of these companies by inviting investments for tree plantation unfair trade practices under the MRTP Act; if so what steps have been taken and to proposed to be taken by the Government in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI J. VENGAL RAO) : (a) to (c) Under the Companies Act, 1956, Companies are not required to file any returns containing information about public investment in tree plantations.

The MRTP Commission, has, however, taken action in five cases as per the provisions of the MRTP Act, 1969 relating to unfair trade practices. The details of these cases are given in the enclosed statement.